

# 2014 County Highlights

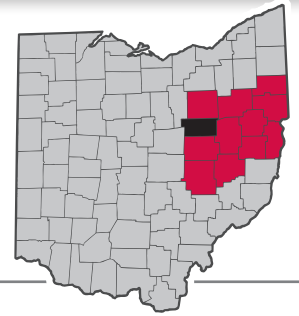


## HOLMES County

### CROSSROADS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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### ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Agricultural production remains a significant source of income in Holmes County, which is home to 1,573 farms, with an average size of 119 acres each and a total of 187,658 acres in farm production. More than 90 percent of the county's farms remain under family control. The latest population census indicates that 50 percent of the county population is Amish. In 2013, 60,097 acres of corn, 41,271 acres of soybeans, 34,620 acres of hay and 487 acres of vegetables were harvested. With 19,597 milk cows and 54,480 cattle/calves, Holmes County is the third highest in the state for both categories. Holmes also ranks second for number of sheep. Of the land in farms, 55 percent is cropland, 17 percent is pasture and 21 percent is managed woodland. Holmes County remains as one of the **top ten agriculture receipts in production value** in Ohio.
- A collaborative effort between OSU Extension, Holmes County Soil and Water, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources was used to manage the ponds in the county. A **pond clinic** was hosted by a local Amish family. Participants learned new information about pond weed control, fish stocking, nuisance animal control and pond safety equipment used in rescues. Pond safety kits were made by the educator and advertised throughout the county media outlets. This resulted in 68 kits being installed at ponds with no safety equipment.
- **Pesticide Applicator Training** was attended by 242 farm managers. They were provided with information related to crop production and controlling weed, insect, and disease

pests. Participants were also updated with the increased number of pest invaders to Ohio's forest system. Exit survey results indicated that the managers had made multiple changes to their operating practices due to training received through the training and recertification program.

- **Maple syrup production programming**, designed to assist maple syrup producers with making the highest quality product, was held in 15 workshops. One was held in Holmes County, six were held within Ohio and the remaining 11 were held out of state. A total of 585 maple syrup producers was reached. With a growing demand for locally grown foods, this programming aided producers to help meet the demand for products. Ohio is ranked fourth nationally in maple syrup production.

### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Successful Co-Parenting**, a program for divorcing/separating parents of minor children, was attended by more than 40 participants. Ninety-eight percent of participants said that they feel more prepared to co-parent as a result of the program. When asked what they will do differently now, comments included, "Realize that I can only change my own behaviors and reactions and not those of my former spouse."
- OSU Extension provides support to those involved in the home processing of food by answering consumer calls and by conducting **pressure canner testing and home food preservation workshops**. These are great opportunities to talk about the steps needed to ensure the safety of home food preservation. Seven pressure canner testing events



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and many one-on-one, in-office tests were conducted for more than 200 canner units. Almost 85 percent of canner units tested needed new parts or needed to have adjustments made during the processing procedure. Fourteen food preservation workshops were held. Several classes included a pickle tasting, during which participants were able to taste five home-processed pickles made from store-bought mixes to determine which brands and styles they preferred.

post-test results indicates that this six-hour food safety program impacts how these employees handle the food served to our local residents and visitors. Participants learned about the dangers of foodborne illness; preventing cross-contamination; utilizing time and temperature control effectively; and cleaning, sanitizing, and managing for pests.

**Holmes County receives \$26,755 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.**

## PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Holmes County had 30 community **4-H Clubs**, with 490 club members enrolled in over 900 projects in 2014. One hundred ninety-five adult advisors and committee members volunteered to provide leadership to these members. The value of the volunteer service these volunteers bring to Holmes County is nearly \$200,000. Goal-setting, leadership and following through on commitments are the life skills that members gain by completing project requirements.
- Providing youth livestock exhibitors with education about the proper care and management of their market animals was the focus of five **Quality Assurance Training** workshops. More than 300 members representing 4-H and FAA clubs across the county attended to build management and evaluation skills by keeping accurate records for fair projects. The success was evident in that only two of the hundreds of Drug Use Notification Forms required to show at the fair were not correctly filled out. This represents a major improvement over forms turned in during the past years.

## ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- The eighth-grade classes of Hiland Middle School, assisted by 24 adult volunteers, participated in **Real Money, Real World**. Ninety-three students attended the in-class lessons and hands-on simulation in which the students had to pay for the necessities in life with a predetermined salary. Participants documented learning in a variety of areas related to money and their future. Student comments ranged from "Childcare is expensive!" to "This was a real eye opener!" to "Trying to budget your money isn't easy."
- The nationally recognized **ServSafe Food Handler Program** was offered for the 15th year. In 2014, 11 participants attended the 20-hour program. Ten of those individuals taking the standardized certification test passed, with an average score of 95 percent. **Person-in-Charge Training** was attended by 198 Holmes County food service employees. An average 14 percent increase from pre- to